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Russia and Asia

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WE ARE LIVING at the time of changes with no precedence in human history either in scope or in pace. The geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts which began in the last decade of the last century and are gaining momentum in the 21st century are shaping a new picture of the world. “The transfer of global wealth and economic power now under way – roughly from West to the East – is without precedent in modern history”,¹ it will continue for the foreseeable future. An expanse of independent policy is widening: scores of countries doomed to centuries of silence and kept at the backyard of oecumene have acquired voices of their own. Civilizations suppressed for centuries have revived to add more color and variety to the world. The seemingly unshakeable hegemony of the United States is retreating to give space to a multipolar world. These tectonic shifts and the forces behind them suggest a logical conclusion: history has been spurred on.

Asia, the home of about 4 billion people (two-thirds, or 60 percent of mankind in 2007) has found itself in the epicenter of what is going on. Napoleon warned in his time: “Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world.” Today, nearly all Asia is waking up to leave behind centuries of submission and humiliation, life on the periphery of or even absence from international affairs. This caused a great geopolitical and geoeconomic revolution which radically altered the balance of forces on the international scene² to affect, to a great extent, the positions and politics of states.

Asia and the East have acquired prime importance in world economics. Many of the Asian countries demonstrated an economic upsurge better described as a miracle. For the first time since 1850, the larger part of the world economic growth takes place outside the United States, Europe and Canada. Today, two out of the world’s five largest economies are found in Asia (China and Japan); India is rapidly closing the gap. The lat-

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est financial and economic crisis hit Asia as much as the rest of the world yet the Asian countries coped with the injuries much better than the developed states. The Asian Development Bank forecasted the growth of 7.5 percent in 2010. More and more often prominent Western economists refer to Asian countries as locomotives of world economy. It is too early to assess the damage done by the crisis in many respects yet it is more or less clear that Asia will gain more weight and will acquire a more important role.

Economic maturity of Asian states pushes them toward political independence. Asia's role in international relations and in the course of history is changing beyond recognition. To-day, it is actively

involved in global politics. Two Asian countries (China and India) are moving toward the world power status with a group of influential states (best described as *de facto* poles of the multipolar world) are progressing in the same direction. There is an opinion in the expert community, shared by Kissinger and Brzezinski, that the center of global politics has already shifted to Asia and the Pacific.

More than that: Asia's ascent which cuts the ground from under the Euro- and Americano-centrism contributes to the philosophy of Asia-centrism and the forecasts that in the 21st century Asia will become the center of the world order. This is a shared opinion of political scientists of world renown such as Jacques Attali and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The broader and much stronger Asia-centric cultural identity is one of the natural results of the advance of Asia. The Asian civilizations which for centuries remained suppressed by colonial yoke and the norms and standards imposed by the West have revived and awakened to new life. This has changed the civilizational landscape, altered the relative weights of civilizations and opened the doors to Asian cultural expansion. "An expanded Asia-centric cultural identity," says the NIC in its report, "may be the most profound effect of a rising Asia. A new, more Asian cultural identity is likely to be rapidly packaged and distributed... Even Hollywood has begun to reflect these Asian influences."³

In some of the Asian countries the economic breakthrough was accompanied by socio-cultural and psychological repercussions which

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resounded across the continent. A great shift in the consciousness of the Asian nations pushed national identity to the top of the agenda. Self-respect became much more noticeable and the old ideas about superiority of the West have been practically discarded. Asia started talking about the “Asian idea” and “Asian self-awareness” closely connected with the Asian countries’ inspiring economic dynamics. The mounting popularization and popularity of the Asian idea and Asian model spur on national consciousness and encourage nationalism up to and including its extreme forms.

A large part of the continent is home of the world of Islam which is experiencing powerful national and religious renaissance accompanied in many Muslim countries by growing passionarity and outbursts of extremism. This is another existentialist problem fraught, if wrongly treated, with destructive conflicts.

In the 21st century, the world will face a new Asia already born and developing. In the coming decade this will be one of the specific features and one of the challenges of the new world order. From this time on Asia, armed with its newly-acquired and mounting self-confidence, will assume responsibility for its future; it has already moved to the fundamentally new positions in the world to acquire much greater and growing influence in international affairs. The world will face an Asia which has set up and is building multisided economic and political structures (ASEAN, ASEAN + 1, ASEAN + 3, APEC), political dialogue platforms in the form of East Asia Summit and is thinking about an Asian monetary fund, single currency, etc.

Asia, and East Asia for that matter, is a political and economic patchwork of states with different social systems and interests, economic indices, friends, and cultures. The above, however, applies, to various degrees, to the entire continent and is responsible for its current makeup.

The amazing Asian upsurge made the Asian countries desirable partners and objects of stiff rivalry. The EU countries driven by the seemingly limitless Asian markets have concentrated at economics without losing sight of political impacts. They are courting Asia, to borrow an expression from Western journalists.

Washington, convinced according to President Obama that the makeup of the 21st century will be determined by the relationships between the United States and China, is indulging in double or even triple game. The U.S. relies on its huge political and economic potential to tie to itself the largest possible number of the Asian countries to preserve its leadership

in future. Its containment policy as applied to China looks familiar and brings to mind the recent Cold War ploys. America capitalizes on the fear of China's rapidly growing might betrayed by some of its neighbors to draw them into its military orbit and promise allied relationships.

It will be no exaggeration to say that Russia and Asia are tied together by providential interests which do not boil down to Asia's international weight; Asia is treated as a sum-total of Asian civilizations; Russia's ideas of itself are not less important in this context. Much of what is going on in Asia should be still comprehended and accepted yet Russia has certain advantages to rely upon in the current rivalry over Asia. Russia is an Asian country; its territory reaches the continent's heartland; its history, identity, demography, culture, and folk traditions bear the stamp of Asia. Favorable conditions and clever policies may turn Russia into a bridge and an intermediary between Europe and a larger part of Asia in the geographical and other respects.

Mutual enrichment and peaceful coexistence of peoples and confessions in Russia and the country's multicultural development can be described as one of its precious and very much needed assets. Today, when interaction between cultures and civilizations (which will acquire second wind in the 21st century) is coming to the fore, Russia, the country of a "mixed" civilization which has already acquired this experience, is especially interesting in this respect. If protected and developed, Russia's inter-civilizational nature and the experience of coexistence and cooperation of different nations and different civilizations may serve a desirable social, cultural and political resource for the rest of the world. Russia's historical legacy gives it a chance to contribute, on a great scale, to a peaceful settlement of one of the central problems of our time, a new meeting of East and West.

The Asian countries, on the other hand, would like to actively cooperate with Russia and move forward in this direction. A multipolar world fits their interests which should be described as a factor of signal importance. They are seeking maximal foreign policy maneuverability and well-balanced relations with the West, Japan, India, and China; in this context, Russia is seen as one of the balancing factors.

Russia, on its side, is seeking equal and mutually advantageous relations with all Asian countries; there is not a shadow of confrontation in its policy; it never sets one Asian state against another and never tries to impose unacceptable conditions on potential partners. It respects the sovereignty of all states and objects to any attempts of any power to divide

the continent into influence zones.

Russia's image in Asia and the East is another weighty argument in its favor: it has accumulated rich experience of equal and frequently large-scale cooperation with all countries between the Middle East and the Pacific. Russia's ties with the Eurasian countries are rooted in the still living memory of our country's principled position, support and assistance extended to Vietnam and China during the years of foreign aggression. Russia's resources very much needed by some of the local economies add to its attractiveness.

Russia is a predominantly European country connected to the West by its past, culture, ramified political and economic contacts and, last but not least, democratic values. The current task of economic modernization can hardly be resolved without cooperation with the West. We should not ignore other important, or even vitally important, factors – geographic, economic, geopolitical, culturological, national and confessional – which formulate their imperatives and prevent Russia's complete and final merge with the West. Russia is prescribed the strategies which take its unique geographic location on two continents into account.

A combination of Western (European) and Asian (Eastern) civilizations is Russia's hallmark which makes it special and unique (but not exceptional) and which accounts for its potential in the world community. Its Asian heritage cannot be wiped out: it is responsible for stagnating, mediaeval or even servile traits which coexist with the natural and inalienable part of Russia's historical strength and civilizational potential. Its attitude to Asia and the East is, in fact, its attitude to itself: Russia is home of Tatars, Bashkirs, Yakuts, the Caucasian and other peoples. Russia is more than a place where various national groups live side by side. It is a multinational country in which the Russians, its backbone, and other peoples have been living for centuries not merely as neighbors. They lived together; they mixed up and enriched each other culturally and spiritually. They lived through social cataclysms and rebuffed enemy inroads; they have a common history and a common destiny. For many years, we shared the state with millions of Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghizes, Turkmens, Tajiks, and Azeris. Today, we are united into the Commonwealth of Independent States. In other words, while Europe and America look at the Eastern world as an alien and unknown entity, Russia could not and cannot accept this approach. This should not be treated as its weakness because this is a source of its strength.

For many years now, Russian society has been trying to identify

Russia either as a Western or an Eastern country. The culturological shell contains the dilemma: should Russia join one of the power centers, act together with the West on the world scene and communicate with the East in this capacity. Today, the West is not only democratic societies but also a military-political alliance.

The following figures suggest the answer: 80 percent of Russia's territory and 70 percent of its borders are located in Asia; nearly half of the Russians live in the country's Asian part. The Soviet Union's disintegration shifted the country's geostrategic and geopolitical center to its Asian part, closer to Krasnoyarsk. Russia's future cannot be separated from the prospects of economic growth of Siberia and the Russian Far East (12 million sq m and the longest Pacific coast), their modernization and cooperation with the rapidly developing APR countries.

Russia's most powerful neighbors are found in the East; the relations with the East mean Russia's relations with China, India and Japan; more than that, there are the ASEAN countries and South Korea, the "infant prodigies" as well as the Muslim world with contacts with the Muslims of Russia and a thousand-kilometer long common border. Russia cannot ignore the fact that Asia and the East are moving to the proscenium of world politics.

The economic factor is no less important: Russia's Eastern region tends to the APR and integration with the countries of Northeast Asia. Its modernization agenda does not allow Russia to miss the opportunities offered by the rapidly growing Asian countries.

It seems that both the "Westerners" and "Easterners" (who favor the Eastern choice) are contemplating a false alternative: Russia needs neither a merge nor confrontation with the West and the East. It needs a position which will allow it to defend its independence and its interests while preserving and developing close political and economic cooperation and partnership strategy.

Russia's multivectoral approach is too important to be abandoned; instead, it should be promoted and intensified. The Westerners and the Easterners insist on a choice which does nothing good to Russia's national interests; by avoiding it Russia remains free in its foreign policy choices and can capitalize on the advantages thus gained to preserve its maneuverability.

A choice between Europe and Asia, between East and West contradicts the very essence of the Eurasian problem. Russia should find its place in the Eurasian expanse, a new geopolitical and geoeconomic enti-

ty, which is gradually taking shape through globalization, the shifts underway in the Asian countries and their increasingly wider contacts with Europe. It will become the scene on which many crucial processes will take place to determine the course of history in the 21st century.

The United States has already identified its Eurasian priorities and entrusted them to the Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy at the Department of State and his staff. NATO is looking toward Eurasia; the European Union has learned to think in Eurasian categories and set up posts of special representatives for Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Russia in the very heart of Eurasia and itself a smaller copy of the vast continent may profit from these developments. Responsibility, however, is great: its Eurasian strategy within its foreign policy context should take into account Russia's unique position and open up historical perspectives.

There is no need to stand aside as an autonomous force: China's experience testifies that this narrows down the prospects of economic cooperation with the United States and the West as a whole, something which Russia badly needs and from which it will profit in the presence of a stable regime and well-substantiated policy.

Russia's Asian policy is as varied as the continent itself. Its politics and diplomacy are geared at adequate responses to the multitude of Asian countries and their interests while never losing sight of the common Asian dimension of their positions. China and India, the continent's largest and fastest developing states, are especially important for Russia's Asian policies.

The relations with China are one of the central and eternal issues of Russia's policies and a very important factor of Russia's future. The recently achieved strategic partnership can be described as an outstanding achievement of Russia's and China's foreign policies. During the recent visit of the Chinese leader to Moscow, President Medvedev pointed out that the relations between the two countries had reached "the highest point." Chairman Hu Jintao spoke about strategic partnership in the 21st century and his country's intention to "deepen" it and the already achieved "unprecedented level" of the agreements with Russia. These are not mere words: they describe real achievements.

Russia and China share certain fundamental national interests; our common border, the world's longest, is over 4200 km long. This makes the two countries the strategic rear of each other which means that their national security is ensured by friendly and good-neighborly relations. The fact that after 40 years of talks the border became legally demarcat-

ed for the first time, cannot be overestimated.

The both countries' highly impressive potential of economic cooperation has been created and is maintained by the practically limitless markets, fast economic growth and the mutually complementary economies. China comes second after Germany as Russia's trade partner. Between 2005 and 2009, trade turnover increased by 69 percent; in the first ten months of 2010, by 45 percent against the similar period of the previous year to reach \$45.1 billion. The leaders of both countries are determined to reach the level of \$60-80 billion.

The trade structure, however, cannot be described as favorable for Russia, the faults being typical of its trade with other countries. I have in mind the basically raw-material profile and the inadmissibly low share of exported machines and equipment. It is for Russia to remedy the faults by changing the nomenclature and quality of exported goods and taking into account the demand on the world markets.

The sides are involved in several large-scale projects: the second phase of the Tanwan atomic power station, a JV in Tianjin (an oil refinery and 500 petrol stations), a coal liquefaction plant in Russia, etc.

Russia and China are developing the energy supplier-energy consumer line: the Skovorodino-Kozmino oil pipeline (7.5 thousand km long) has been commissioned. In 2010, it is supposed to move 300 thousand barrels a day; in 2011, twice as much. The Chinese backed the project with a \$25 billion loan under low interest. The Russian side guaranteed annual oil supplies of 15 million tons for the next 20 years. This is part of a continental project designed to bring supplies of energy fuels from Russia in the next 15 years up to 50 percent of the continent's export. Russia received \$5 billion to develop coal mines; China began receiving electric energy from Russia. The Asia-Europe transit can be described as another weighty and promising side of cooperation.

China's dynamic development opens good prospects of economic cooperation in all fields: trade, high technologies and investment projects. Russia's own economic dynamics and its innovational bias are no less important; industrial upsurge, an active attention of state structures and the business community (which still prefers the well-trodden westbound paths) should not be underestimated. During his latest Moscow visit Premier Wen Jiabao said that Beijing was prepared to support Russia's modernization efforts. He discussed with President Medvedev China's cooperation within the Skolkovo project and, according to the press, informed the Russians that his country was prepared to invest up to \$1

billion. ⁴

The multipolar world, rejection of hegemonic policies and the cult of force together with interference in domestic affairs of countries outside international mandates; struggle against terrorism, extremism and separatism; non-confrontational international cooperation and equal relationships as the agenda for the 21st century; defense of the UN and the Security Council's powers and statuses and support for legal demands of states moving toward the frontline of international relations can be described as both countries' shared interests on the international arena. Russia and China are involved in several international structures, such as BRIC, SCO and others.

The political overtones of military-technical cooperation of long standing are a special feature of the relationships between the two countries. Together with India, China will probably remain one of the key partners in this sphere if the Russian military-industrial complex preserves its high standards.

Humanitarian cooperation can be described as another promising field. The reciprocal China-Russia national theme years, which as President Medvedev put it, "seen over 500 important events" confirmed a no mean mutual interest in the cultures of both countries. Speaking at the closing gala of the Year of China in Russia Premier Wen Jiabao said that in China several generations had been influenced by works of outstanding Russian writers and composers – Tolstoy, Pushkin and Tchaikovsky. Russia, said the Chinese prime minister, was one of the world's leading powers in science and technology the contribution of which to human civilization could not be overestimated. This was hardly a diplomatic ploy.

Russia and China need stability in Central Asia; they are prepared to build up their cooperation with the Central Asian states and neutralize the efforts of the extra-regional powers seeking control over the region.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is their joint foreign policy product in Central Asia. Its vast territory of 30 million sq km, home of three-quarters of mankind suggests a higher international status with the ambitions to match. Its members voiced their desire to establish contacts with ASEAN. Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov came forward with a suggestion that a harmonious cooperation between the ASEAN regional forum and the SCO administrative structures should demonstrate more vigor. To be realized, these ambitions require an adequate foreign policy context and, more importantly, sustainable harmo-

nization of aims, of Russia and China in the first place, and the other SCO members.

Pragmatic foreign policies with no ideological undertones can be described as one of the key stimuli of the relationships between China and Russia. They cannot and should not be described as a military-political alliance – this would have contradicted the foreign policy message of both countries. Russia and China are strategic partners; this is a new type of cooperation not aimed against any subject of international relations. It forms a vast expanse of peace and stability very much in the interests of the world community.

I should say that Russia does not want instability or disorder in China. Economic collapse or domestic disturbances (something which certain foreign politicians and political analysts have been predicting in the last few decades) would have caused headache for Russia in the form of huge trans-border migrations; this would have resounded across the world.

We all know that neither the United States nor the European Union wants the Russian-Chinese rapprochement. The West, and the United States in particular, has been trying to oppose China to Russia. They are never tired of writing about “millions of starving people” (not as hungry as they imagine), “sparsely-populated Siberia” and China’s rising might. In September 2010, at a press conference which concluded the 7th Valdai Club Meeting Vladimir Putin responded to these allegations by describing Russia’s relations with China as strategic partnership and asked to stop “trying to frighten Russia about China.”

The reason is all too obvious: cooperation with China is signally important for Russia’s independent foreign policy. Strategic partnership with China not merely fits Russia’s fundamental national interests but also provides its diplomacy with a trump at the political card table. A quarrel with China will reduce Russia to the status of America’s junior partner or make it a trump card in America’s poker game with China. Russia would have been isolated in Asia.

In Russia there are small groups of people who are pursuing similar aims and indulge in anti-Chinese rhetoric.

Relations with China call for pragmatic and sober approaches; this means that none of the potential complications (more or less common in international relations) should be excluded.

At the same time, first, the contradictions between Russia and China related to their bilateral relations and contacts in Central, Southeast and Northeast Asia which exist and probably will not disappear are balanced

out by the two countries' common interests in many fields and many issues. The relations between Russia and China can be described as rivalry and competition but they should not degenerate into confrontation. People should not be frightened; it is much better to use the available time to transform the Russian Far East and Siberia, which is one of the top points on Russia's agenda. This can be described as a weighty foreign policy factor and, probably, the weightiest component of Russia's Asian policy. We should be bold enough to admit: the current demographic situation and its prospects (to say nothing about the other reasons) do not allow Russia to supply enough workforce to modernize the region. We should find convincing arguments to persuade the local people to remain in the region; invite enough, preferably Russian speaking, immigrants from different countries under strict and efficient control and offer them adequate working and living conditions.

Professional "experts" in China and certain straightforward etatists will object yet they should be persuaded. *The Economist* described the situation with a great deal of knowledge: as soon as people start talking about immigration for the sake of reviving the region, demagogues start fanning passions with the talks about the Chinese stratagem to recapture the old possessions by sending Chinese to the other side of the border. 5

The countries of Eastern and Southeast Asia should be encouraged to contribute to modernization of Siberia and the Russian Far East. The program of Cooperation between Regions of the Far East and Eastern Siberia of the Russian Federation and the Northeast of the PRC (2009-2018) the President of the Russian Federation and Chairman of the People's Republic of China approved in September 2009 deserves special mention.

China's future policy, very much as policy of any other state, especially those rapidly gaining strength, is an unknown quantity. So far, Beijing does not intend to revise its long-term course at transformations inside the country. Those who are concerned with Russia's future, its independence and renaissance know that there is no alternative to constructive cooperation with China.

The most optimistic of the forecasts does not rule out different, not quite optimistic variants therefore the state should be prepared to act accordingly. For the sake of its national interests in the East (and the South) Russia should consistently move, but without too much pressure, toward an adequate security system in Asia.

Here is another consideration. So far the very different economic weights and economic dynamics do not prevent fruitful and constructive

relationships between Russia and China. Future, however, might be different: Russia's adequate policies and effective diplomacy should be supported with a faster economic growth, rising might and the efforts to close the so far widening gap between the two countries.

India is another important partner of Russia while the special nature of their relationships is unique in both countries' foreign policy range. From the very beginning, the relations have been free from conflicts; they can be described as reliable and are based on mutual trust; they have been never questioned (the brief Kozyrev period being the only exception); both countries consistently expanded their cooperation; in an absence of considerable contradictions they, as a rule, agreed on the pivotal international issues. Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh described them as unique. For many decades, said he, two major players on the world scene had remained friends while the relations with other powers had been marred with crises. Our interests, said the Indian statesman, both political and national, were compatible.

Moscow and New Delhi are old friends with over fifty years of friendship behind them (slightly less than the age of India's independence). They survived the difficulties of the 1990s caused by the events and hardships in Russia and the changes in the world. Both countries had to adjust themselves to the new realities and the unipolar world.

When its superpower partner left the stage India had to seek better relations with the United States. The inevitable was accomplished yet not at the expense of the tested friends. Indian prime minister said that the relations with third countries would never be built at the expense of the time-tested contacts with Russia.

We have left this period behind; today both countries seek closer and multisided cooperation. India has not forgotten its sympathy for Russia; it has appreciated the advantages of multivectoral maneuvering. This explains its desire to establish closer relations with Russia. President of India Pratibha Patil has said: "We in India appreciate Russia as a reliable friend which has passed the test of time. It is an important country with an active role to play. It is a large power the opinions of which on the issues of global concerns are heeded." ⁶

Russia and India are tied together by their firm strategic partnership based on their shared national interests in the sphere of security, geopolitical circumstances and economy; they share many ideas and approaches to key international problems. Both reject the regime of hegemony in international affairs and the unipolar world; they support the development

of an alternative, multipolar structure; they insist on respect for international law and order in interstate relations, a stronger role for the United Nations and are actively involved in fighting terrorism and separatism. The Declaration titled "Deepening the Strategic Partnership" signed in Moscow in December 2009 says: "India and Russia share a view that radical changes taking place in the international system... provide opportunities to build a new, democratic and fair multipolar world order."

India needs Russia (in the same way as Russia needs India) as one of the pillars of its independent policy at the regional and global scales. Its relations with Russia help confirm its balanced policy and oppose all attempts to impose on it unilateral international orientation. It should be said that today the constructive and stabilizing role of close relations and strategic partnership has become obvious in much wider zones and with much wider international expanses.

Their common interests brought India and Russia together in several international institutions and structures, BRIC (or BRICS, together with South Africa) in the first place. It stands a good chance of becoming an important component of the budding world order granted there are broad mutual understanding inside it and an adequate political course. India's observer status with SCO can hardly be discussed outside the Russia-India relations. India, Russia and China are cooperating inside RIC in the form of regular meetings of their foreign ministers (ten such meetings have already taken place) which can positively affect the relationships among the partners.

Russia has also supported India's application for the UN SC permanent member seat.

Recently, economic ties between the two countries have become much more active yet they still fell short of their economic potentials and trail behind their political cooperation. India is the 24th among Russia's trade partners with 0.9 percent of Russia's foreign trade. Russia can boast of meager 0.8 percent in India's exports. The recent concerted efforts have created positive dynamics: last year, their trade turnover increased by 8 percent to reach the figure of nearly \$9 billion. The two countries are determined to reach the figure of \$20 billion by 2015.

At a meeting with Russian scientists, Premier of India Manmohan Singh spoke about the huge potentials of economic cooperation between the countries with mutually complimentary economies and pointed to power production and the defense complex as the spheres of successful cooperation.

Nuclear power production is one of such fields: twelve power generating units of an atomic power station will be built with Russia's cooperation. Gazprom cooperates with Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) in the Bay of Bengal. India has already invested \$1.7 billion equity participation into Sakhalin-1 and is negotiating its wider involvement.

Indian money is channeled to coal mining, petroleum chemistry, car industry, information technologies, etc. A large share of medicine sold in Russia is produced in India. The Indian debt to the USSR is used to pay for the products very much needed in Russia; the joint Russian-Indian chemical metallurgical complex which produces titanium alloys is one of the examples.

This, however, has not tapped to the full India's huge potential as a partner of Russia. To improve the situation, the Russian business community should explore the possibilities and use them.

Very much like China, India is one of the biggest clients of the Russian military-industrial complex; it buys the latest armament types and is involved in several joint military-technical projects. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies based in London, India has already bought from Russia armaments to the total sum of \$50 billion, more than any other country. More than half of the weapons used by the Indian army were produced in Russia. During the visit of Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh to Moscow, the sides signed an intergovernmental agreement on military-technical cooperation for 2011-2020.

India and Russia are working on the BrahMos (Brahmaputra-Moscow) super-sonic anti-ship cruise missile, multifunctional transport aircraft and the fifth-generation jet fighter (cooperation on the latter will go on for the next 20 to 30 years). Continued cooperation will depend on the scientific and technical level of products supplied by the Russian military-industrial complex; competition with Western firms which spare no effort to wedge into the Indian market will be stiff and uncompromising.

In recent years, India has joined the "Asian miracle" club which opens even brighter prospects for its further cooperation with Russia. In 2006-2007, India demonstrated 9.4 percent of economic growth; the mid-term forecasts (until 2020) are no less impressive: 7 to 7.5 percent every year. Today, Indian economy has come close to Germany, the world's fourth economy. High technologies figure prominently: India is the second, after the United States, exporter of software services: in 2006, its export amounted to \$47 billion. The Indian government is determined to transform the country into a "technological superpower"; today, over 1.5

million are engaged in scientific research.

The task, formulated in 2000, to double the per capita income by 2010 has been fulfilled despite considerable (600 million) population growth. The current task is to double per capita income during the next decade.

This is the Indian economic miracle for you. This and other factors of its might, its growing potential, confident and constructive policy and its widening involvement will create the Indian political miracle. The country's new role and higher international prestige will make it one of the world's leading powers. Political analysts talk about it as a future world power.

The above suggests the following: relations with India are very important for Russia. They were and remain one of the key elements of Russia's (and India's) international policies which rest on a wide and firm foundation. They are much more complicated today than before which means that they require constant attention and much more subtle approaches, if not cultivation.

Japan has, unfortunately, alienated itself from those of the Asian countries which cooperate and have friendly relations with Russia. Moscow has many times demonstrated its desire to establish active partner relations with Tokyo which preferred to ignore this. The Japanese policy have no prospects: its ruling circles are fanning the passions over the "northern territories" to exploit it in domestic politics.

Asia holds an important place in Russia's foreign policy; it seems that the "reset" relations with the United States and improved, and very much desired, relations with the West should be accompanied by much more active efforts. This will produce desired effects in both sectors.

The Vietnam visit of President Medvedev and its outstanding results will make this country Russia's key partner in Southeast Asia; Russia's return to ASEAN; the decision on our participation in the East Asia Summits and the coming APEC conference in Vladivostok will, hopefully, produce a positive effect. It should be said that Russia's more active Asian policy will allow it to put on the table important initiatives designed to defuse tension and strengthen security in the APR.

It goes without saying that effective and adequate policies and diplomacy are not enough; the desired result will depend on the foundation which consists of the country's might, its material and spiritual potentials, and political and economic attractiveness. Very much like any other country, Russia itself should find the most convincing arguments for its foreign partners.

NOTES

¹ Document of the U.S. NIC “Global Trends 2015: A Transformed World,” Washington, NIC, November 2008, p. IV.

² As a result economic and strategic might moved and is moving to Asia. See: *The Economist*, June 12, 2009.

³ Mapping the Global Future. Report of the National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project. “The Contradictions of Globalization.”

⁴ *Kommersant*, November 25, 2010.

⁵ *The Economist*, July 11, 2009.

⁶ *Izvestia*, September 2, 2009.

Key words: Asia, the East, Asia-centric cultural identity, ASEAN, APR, China, BRICS, India